

SANSOM SPARKS PALACE

THE latest fans to marvel at the talents of Crystal Palace's promising young full-back Kenny Sansom were the 1,800 who attended Monday night's attractive friendly match at Loakes Park.

But it was his attacking flair rather than his defensive role that the spectators were able to admire and the highlight of his display — and indeed the whole match — came after seven minutes when he opened the scoring with as fine a goal as you could wish to see.

Sansom was on the half-way line when he started the sprint which enabled him to run on to a perfect pass by Neil Smillie, zip between two defenders and still at full pace, send a shot wide of John Maskell into the right side of the goal from 15 yards.

It was a score of stunning brilliance and it was scarcely surprising that Wycombe were in something of a daze for the next 15 minutes. At that stage it looked as though they could be overrun.

Vince Hilaire, such an easy mover, found acres of room in which to operate while Dave Swindlehurst always looked threatening.

DETERMINED

Yet for all their possession Palace rarely looked like scoring against a Wycombe defence with Keith Mead restored to the central position alongside Alan Phillips. Mead was clearly determined to show that he is worth a regular place in the side and performed most creditably.

Because Mick Holifield was confined to bed with influenza, Steve Hardwick went into a defensive mid-field role and helped snuff many of the Palace raids which broke down on the edge of the penalty area.

Wycombe, it was, who dictated the play in the later stages of the half and they could quite easily have equalised. Mead fired wildly when in a threatening position and John Priestley twice had shots blocked by goalkeeper John Burridge in trouble.

REPLACED

Burridge was replaced at half-time by David Fry but it was Blues goalkeeper John Maskell who must have wished he had left the field, when his simple mistake put Palace 2-0 up in the 49th minute.

He looked to have Swindlehurst's speculative 25 yard shot well covered, but tragically the ball slipped from his grasp and trickled over the

Wycombe Wanderers 0, Crystal Palace 2 Report by MICHAEL KNOX

line. It was the sort of mistake that 'Mask' makes once a season — better in a friendly than in a crucial cup-tie.

That, as it turned out was Palace's last shot on target in the whole match. Manager Terry Venables made a triple substitution in the 59th minute which brought off both Sansom and Hilaire — and thereafter Palace never threatened.

Skipper Howard Kennedy, who like his side rose to the occasion, led a furious assault on the Palace goal in the last 20 minutes. Dave Fry saved one Kennedy effort at the second attempt, and then had to be

quick off his line to thwart Dylan Evans who had come on for the struggling Stewart Atkins.

But the best Blues effort of the night belonged to Kennedy who sent his left foot shot on to the cross bar following a corner.

The Palace goal survived but Wycombe still recovered some of their lost pride with one of the best performances of the season and can look forward to their forthcoming cup ties with renewed confidence.

During the half-time break, club officials took round a blanket to collect money for the Sharon Flanagan fund. They have raised, together with their

supporters' club, between £80 and £100 for the girl.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, R. Davies, K. Mead, A. Phillips, S. Hardwick, S. Atkins (sub: D. Evans 72 mins), J. Priestley, S. Long, H. Kennedy, T. Scott.

CRYSTAL PALACE: J. Burridge (sub: D. Fry 45 mins); T. Fenwick, K. Sansom (sub: K. Dare 59 mins, A. Harris 80 mins), S. Kember, W. Gilbert, P. Nicholas, L. Carter (sub: C. Sparks 59 mins), J. Murphy, V. Hilaire (sub: S. Leahy 59 mins), N. Smillie, D. Swindlehurst.

Referee: T. Maber (Ruislip).
Half-time: 0-1. **Scorers:** — Sansom (7 mins), Swindlehurst (49).

Attendance: 1,800.

New lights?

Chalfont St Peter football club have received a £750 grant from the Southern Sports Council towards the cost of floodlights.



GARRY FOWLES
... quitting

Fowles leaves

GARRY Fowles, Wycombe's utility defender, has been released by the club after asking to go. He has been unhappy about the small amount of first team football he's played and will try his luck elsewhere.

Fowles joined Wycombe at the start of the season from Harrow Borough as a tall central defender in the Alan Phillips mould. But because Phillips has escaped — touch wood — the long list of injuries, Fowles has played only one league match in that position — against Carshalton.

His other two performances in the Isthmian League have been at full-back, where he deputised most creditably. In another two years Wycombe may value his qualities as a skilful defender, but at present there is no regular place for him and he has decided to go.

Fowles who was not under contract, has not yet joined another club.